

A
SERMON

Preach'd before the

QUEEN

At WHITEHALL,

March 1. 1688.

BY
STMON PATRICK, D. D.
Dean of Peterburgh.

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COLOSS. iii. 15.

And let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts, to the which also ye are called in one Body, and be ye thankful.

IN these words three things offer themselves to our Consideration.

First, A Duty; which is, to let the Peace of God rule in our Hearts.

*Secondly, The Reason of it, which is double:
1st, We are called to it. 2^dy, We are called to it in one Body.*

Thirdly, A Means or Help hereunto; and be ye thankful:

I.

In the *first* of these also, there are three things to be considered.

1. The *Grace* it self here commended to us, which is *Peace*.

2. The *Excellency* of this *Grace*; it is the *Peace of God*.

3. The

3. The *Authority* it ought to exercise over us; let it rule in your *Hearts*.

- I. For the *first* of these; *Peace* doth not here signify that Quiet and Satisfaction, which we have in our Minds and Consciences from a Sense of well-doing, and of God's gracious Promise thereunto: But one part of well-doing; from which that inward Peace and Comfort flows, viz. the Grace of *Peaceableness*. Wherein we consult the Quiet of other Men, as well as our own; and live in an undisturbed Union with them.

Which is a Grace compounded of several other Graces; principally, *Humility* and *Kindness*, *Meekness* and *Patience*. The *two first* of which [*Humility* and *Kindness*] dispose us to avoid the giving any Offence to others: and the *two last* [*Meekness* and *Patience*] dispose us to pass by the Offences that others give to us: By which means Peace is both made and maintained, both in private and publick, in Civil and Christian Society.

For *Peace* being that Grace which preserves us from variance with our Neighbours, and clashing one against another; to the great Prejudice of all Society; it teaches us, as I said, to avoid all those things whereby we may offend other Men; and to keep

keep our selves in such good temper, as not to be too much offended at those things, vvh whereby they give disgust to us.

These are the things which cause all Variance, and make all the Breaches that are among Neighbours: the *Offences* which are either *given* or *taken*. Which Peace instructs us equally to shun; and is it self instructed by Humility and Kindness to shun the giving any, and by Meekness and Patience to shun the taking any Offences when they are given.

It is ill-natur'd Pride and Insolence, which makes Men give Trouble and Disturbance unto those who would live quietly with them: and it is too much Passion and Impatience, which makes others unable to bear with such Provocation.

Both must be amended, before we can come into the Way of Peace. The *first* by humble Thoughts of our selves, and by being *kindly affectioned* one to another in *brotherly Love*, (as the Apostle speaks). The *second*, by meek putting up Injuries, by Forbearance, and patient suffering the insolent Folly of abusive Persons.

These two put us into the way of Peace, and will keep us in it; either by *preventing* Differences, or by *composing* them. For Differences there will be (and my Text supposes as much) as long as Mens Apprehensions of things are vey various; yet they may be

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without the breach of Peace. Which doth not hinder all manner of Differences, but only compose them, by an over-ruling hand, as you shall hear presently; when I have given a short account of the *second thing* under this Head.

- II. Which is, the *Excellence* of this Grace; here called the *Peace of God*: that is, a Divine Quality; of which God is the Author; who works it in the Hearts of true Christians; as a part of his own Image; which he dearly loves, and wherein he exceedingly delights.

In all these regards, it is the *Peace of God*: because it springs from him: and is a Communication of his own Divine Nature; which renders us very like him, and makes us highly beloved of him: who is the most excellent Being; and delights in this Name, the *God of Peace and Love*. For in his most blessed Nature there is no discord, nor dissension: But all the *three Persons* perfectly agree, and intirely accord; being externally united in the same Will, as well as Essence.

Unto which Pattern, our Lord and Saviour tells his Apostles, God intended to form their Minds: that *they all might be one, as he and the Father are one*, Joh. xvii. 21. And the Apostles endeavoured to make the same happy accord among all Christians; that

that they might all speak the same thing; and that there might be no divisions among them; but that they might be perfectly joined together in the same mind; and in the same judgment; 1 Cor. i. 10.

And when we are thus joined together in Peace, and Love; then are we perfect Men in Christ Jesus; and in a singular manner beloved of God: unto whom nothing is so grateful as this; whereby we make the nearest approaches unto his Divine Nature.

By this small touch, I have given upon this Subject; (which I have not room to prosecute) you cannot but see there is the greatest reason, that we should not only admit this Heavenly Guest into our Hearts; but let them be absolutely govern'd by it. Which is the third thing.

The Authority it ought to have over us: Which should be so great, that it command, and have the dominion of all other Affections that stir in our Souls. For so the Apostle saith, Let the Peace of God rule in your Hearts.

The word, in the Greek, for Rule, relates to Contests and Controversies: in which the Peace of God ought to interpose so powerfully, as to quiet them; that they give no disturbance to the Christian Society.

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translated,

translated, *Let the Peace of God be Unpire in you.* That is, when any Disputes arise, about which ye cannot agree, but are in danger to fall into Parties, and break in pieces: then refer all unto Peace, as you do your Differences to an Arbitrator. As much as to say, let that be concluded, which will make most for Peace. Let it determine every Controversy; moderate in all Differences; be instead of a Judge, to decide and settle all things in dispute: which will soon be at an end, if you do but think with your selves, what will make most for the Peace of the Church, or the Kingdom where you live; and resolve to let that prevail.

In order unto which, we must let it quell all those unruly Passions; which upon such Occasions, are wont to rise up in our Hearts. Anger may begin to boil; Pride and Ambition to swell; Self-love and Interest to make a bustle, and bestir themselves: but then the Love of Peace and Quietness ought to get uppermost, and bear the greatest sway in our Hearts; so as to over-rule and keep down all other Affections, which would be troubling us and others.

This is the Apostle's meaning; and thus the Holy Men of God understood him: who were content to sacrifice any thing, but the Christian Faith, to Peace and Quietness. Concerning which there

an excellent Discourse in the Epistle of **Clement** (one of the Apostles immediate Successors) to the Church of **Corinth**. Where he shows, that those Contentions which began in **St Paul's** days, and could not it seems be suppressed by the Apostolical Authority alone; would have immediately been subdued and quashed, by the Peace of God, if it had been grafted and born Rule in their Hearts.

"Who is there, saith he, that is of a generous Spirit among you? Who is there that hath any Bowels of Compassion? Who, that is full of Charity? Let him say, If this Sedition be for my sake, if this Contention, these Schisms, be upon my Account, I am gone, I depart whither you please. There is nothing that shall be enjoined me, but I will do it. Only let the Flock of Christ be in Peace, with the Elders that are set over it. Thus they, who live that Life which is never to be repented of, have done, and will do. For we have known many, who to be the Authors of Liberty to others, have thrown themselves into Bonds: and many have left their own Cities, that there might be no Strife and Contention about them.

And what he saith Godly Men would do hereafter, according as others had done before them, for Peace sake, was fulfilled, as we find in the Mo-

numents of the Church. Where there are Examples of (such Self-denial, as made them desire (to use the words of one of them) to be thrown into the Sea, like *Jonas*; rather than have the Tempests which was raised upon their account, continue to disturb the Church. Thus I could show some have done since, in later Ages. And if we had the same humble, the same tender-hearted, charitable, and truly generous Spirit, we should think it the greatest Glory to submit all our particular Concerns to the Government of Peace; and not let them prevail to the making any publick Disturbance, no nor private Quarrels with our Neighbours.

Unto which we are now so prone, that we fall out, even about a trifling Opinion: wherein we differ one from another. The reason is, because we are too full of our selves, and too void of Charity and the Peace of God: Which if it did possess our Hearts, we should not be so much wedded as we are to our own Opinions; much less indulge our Passions; but resign them all to be ruled and ordered by this Grace, which teaches us to be of a yielding Spirit, as far as Piety will permit.

Nay, if our Passion, and our Pride were kept under, we should not be impatient to be contradicted:

tradicted: nor think our selves bound to ingage in the Defence of every thing that we judg to be true; nor to rise up against every thing that we judg to be false: But endure without disturbance, the contrary Opinions of others, which may seem untrue to us; if they do no great hurt to the World.

Were we possessed with this desire alone, to make others better, we should not trouble our selves about every Error and Mistake; if the Remedy will prove worse than the Disease: that is, breed Quarrels, and break the Peace, by endless Disputes and Jarrings about it. Our blessed Saviour himself, the Prince of Peace, did not undertake to free Men from every Error whatsoever: but those only, which concerned the means of their Salvation.

And in such matters, when we are constrained to declare our Dissent from others, who are, we apprehend, in dangerous Errors; the Peace of God teaches us to do it in such sweet and gentle manner, that they may see we aim only at their good: And they may not by our rough treating them, take occasion of disgust, not only unto us, but to the Truth also which we defend. For we oftentimes give distaste to others, and make them irreconcilable; not so much by our contrary Opin-

nion,

men, as by a fierce, insolent, presumptuous, and disdainful way of proposing our own Opinion, and opposing theirs.

But it is far worse, when we come to terms of Contempt and Reproach: which are commonly observed to make such Breaches, as are never to be repaired.

The Peace of God teaches us quite another Lesson; and constrains us to compassionate the Weaknesses of our Brethren; to treat them with Tenderness, as well as Humanity; and when they are peevish, and passionate, and prone to quarrel, even then to bear with them, and meekly reduce them to a better Temper.

For the Weaknesses of our Brethren, make them Objects of our Pity, not of our Anger. And they are never more to be pitied, than when they cannot be cured, by our charitable Compassion, and Forbearance of them. Unto which we shall be the more inclin'd, if we consider that we are Men also, and may possibly fall into the same Error, and commit the same Faults: and then what we tolerate in them, it will be their turn to bear withal in us. But especially if we consider, that we are Christians, who lie under this Law: *Bear ye one anothers Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ*; Gal. vi. 2. Which Law of Chari-

ty, and Peace being not fulfilled, is the cause of all the Vexatious Disturbances that are in the World.

We do not mind this Christian Obligation, to bear one anothers Burdens. We have other Inclinations, than to obey the Will of our blessed Lord. We seek our selves, our ovvn Glory, our ovvn Pleasure, our ovvn Interest and Satisfaction in every thing; and are not satisfied vvith this, that God is glorified, our Saviour honoured, Piety promoted, the Church edified; by our Patience, by our Peateableness, by our Forbearance one of another; and by our studying the good of our Neighbours as the greatest Contentment to our selves.

Thus I have explain'd the first part of my Text, the Duty: vvhich I have pressed the more earnestly, because Strife and Contention, vvill spoil all the Fastings and Humiliations of this season: nay, utterly defeat our very Prayers and Supplications. Which then vvill obtain of the God of all Mercy, that perfect Remission and Forgiveness, vvhich vve beg of him: vvhen they dispose us to be merciful, as our Heavenly Father is merciful; to be kind one to another (as the Apostle speaks Ephes. v. 32.) tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us.

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Come vve novy to the *second* part, which is
the Reason, vvheryby the Apostle urges this Duty.

II.

And that is double, as you heard: *First*, vve
are called to it. *Secondly*, vve are called to it, in
one Body.

- I. For the first of these, it suggests to us *three* Ob-
ligations; vvheryby vve are bound to be peaceable.
First, by the *preaching of the Gospel* to us. *Secondly*,
by the *Special Favour*, vvhich God has done us
therein. *Thirdly*, by the *high Honour* he hath also
conferred upon us, in making us partakers of his
Heavenly Calling.

1. *First*, I say, *Calling* is a vvoid vvhich relates
to the *preaching of the Gospel*, by vvhich vve
vvere called unto *Belief of the Truth* (2 Thess. ii.
13. 14.) and by that *Truth* not only taught,
but required, to be at *Peace among our selves*,
(1 Thess. v. 13.) and to keep the *Unity of the Spirit*
in the *Bond of Peace* (Ephes. iv. 3.) Nay, if it
be possible, as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably
with all *Men* (Rom. xii. 18.) or, if they refuse
it, yet to follow *Peace with all Men*, (Heb. xii.
14.) to seek *Peace and ensue it*, (1 Pet. iii. 11.)

Finally,

Finally, brethren, (as St. Paul writes, 2 Cor. xiii. 11.) *be perfect, (i.e. compleat Christians) be of good comfort (or receive this Word of Exhortation), be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you ; that is, as we desire and hope for, the Favour and Love of God, and for all the blessed Effects and Fruits thereof, we are bound to live in peace. For he is the God of peace and love : and his Son is the Prince of peace ; who left Peace with his Church, as his last Legacy when he left the World : Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, John XIV. 27. And his Gospel is the Gospel of peace, the word of reconciliation ; which instructs us in that Heavenly Wisdom, (Jam. III. 17.) which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easie to be entreated ; or, easily persuaded, unto those things which make for peace, tho' therein we deny our own Will, and particular Interest.*

This is the Genius of that Religion, unto which we are called by the preaching of Christ's Gospel.

2. And it was the greatest favour and grace that Heaven could bestow upon us, to communicate unto us the knowledge of his Will, and to make us of this heavenly Spirit ; for so the word *Calling* is sometimes used in Scripture ; for the free Grace and

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Bounty of God; in opposition to any work of ours, whereby we could deserve it; as in *Rom. IX. 11.* *That the purpose of God might stand, not of works, but of him that called: that is, mercifully dispensed the benefit, according to his own Free-will and good Pleasure.*

We do not understand our own happiness, nor the great Grace of God to us, if we do not think our selves highly obliged to him, in commanding and disposing us by the Gospel of his Grace, to be peaceably minded; that is, to be, as I said, of an Heavenly Spirit: For what other Notion can we frame of the Happiness of those above, but that they live in perfect love of God, and of one another, without any discord or contention; which would disturb their Blessed Repose? For having all the very same End and Design, the very same Affections and Desires, which are to do Honour to God, and to promote one anothers good; there can be no rupture, nor so much as quarreling or dissention among them; which arise from mens private desires and aims, and the cross Interests which they pursue in this present world.

And therefore the more perfectly we divest our Minds of all selfishness, and bend our thoughts to study the common good; the nearer we shall approach

proach to their Blessed State; and the fitter we shall be for the Company of happy Souls and Spirits, by such a sweet Concord and Agreement here, as reigns in the Peaceable Society of Heavenly Minds in the other World.

And on the contrary, while we live in Wrath and Bitterness, in Pride and Disdain one of another; and thereby are engaged in perpetual Contentions, and quarrellsome Differences, pursuing one another with a deadly hatred; we are of the same Nature and Disposition with the Infernal Ghosts, the Devil and his Angels: And if we go out of the World in this wretched Temper of Mind (which cannot be changed in a moment) we fall unavoidably into their troublesome Company; who could not be quiet even in Heaven it self, but there raised such a Faction and Disturbance, that they were thrust down from that Blessed Place, and condemned to keep one another company in endless Misery and Despair.

And one great part of their Misery, we all apprehend, is, That they are ever restless and unquiet, unalterably bent to trouble and torment themselves, by contriving how to make disturbance among others.

Which shews what a kindness our Blessed Saviour hath done us, in calling us unto Peace ; and thereby redeeming us from the Society of those rancorous Spirits ; unto whom we are so strongly linkt, while we are of a turbulent and untractable Spirit, that we must necessarily fall into their Company, when we depart from hence ; if we be not cured of this Disease, and have our Natures altered into the peaceable Mind that was in Christ Jesus.

3. By which we understand, *Thirdly*, the Honour also our Lord hath done us, in calling us to be peaceable ; for this the word *Calling* implies, in *Rom. XI. 29.* *The gifts and calling of God, are without Repentance.* Where *Calling* is the great *Preferment* God designed for *Abraham's* Family, and to which accordingly he advanced them ; wherein he intended immutably to have continued them, if they had believed on him, as *Abraham* did.

And indeed we are called to a very high Dignity, by being called unto Peace ; for it intitles us to the Honour of being the Children of the Most High. So our Saviour instructs us in his Sermon upon the Mount,
Matth.

Matt. V. 9. *Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God.*

Peace-makers, are peaceable-minded men. For as to *make a lie*, in Scripture Language, is to be given to Lying, and to make a practice of it: So to *make peace*, is to have a strong constant inclination to it; and to bend that way, upon all occasions. Which is a Divine disposition, and makes us like to God: So like him, that we may thereby be known to be his off-spring; who are endued with his most excellent Nature, and act by his Spirit; and therefore shall be partakers of his blessedness.

This is the sum of the first part of the Reason: We do not answer the gracious design of the Gospel, and the great kindness and honour Christ hath done us, if we do not let the peace of God Rule in our hearts; unto which we are called in one body.

II. That's the *second* part of it; We are therefore called unto peace, because we are called to be *one body*; of which Christ is the Head.

When we were made Christians, we were not brought into that state, to live separately and distinctly, every one of us by our selves; as our particular

ticular Fancies and Affections shall incline us: But to be knit together in one Christian Society; every Part of which is to seek his own good, interest and safety, by preserving the Whole in peace and quietness, without any rupture in the Body of Christ. For by that the Body is destroyed; as by union of the Members it is maintained and preserved.

There is nothing plainer, than that no Society can subsist, unless they who belong to it, as Members of it, live peaceably together; as the Members of the Natural Body do: which are made to love, and have a care one of another, and keep all together, without any division; for that certainly tends to its dissolution. But above all others, the Christian Body, or Society, is disposed and bound hereunto: by its very *Constitution*; and by various *Obligations*.

As for its *Constitution*; It is founded upon the Law of love, and kindness, and mutual care of each other: By which our Saviour hath told us, all his Disciples are to be known, as by their very Badge and proper Character.

And as for their *Obligation*; St. Paul reckons up a great number of things, wherein we are united; and thereby tied to keep the unity of the spirit in the
bond

bond of peace, Ephes. IV. 5, 6. *There is one Body*, That's the first and general obligation : And what can be more *unnatural*, than for the Members of the same Body, to quarrel and fall out, and tear one another in pieces ? *And one spirit* (that's the *second*) the Spirit of Love and Truth, which suggests the same peaceable inclinations to every one, that it doth to any one ; and what more *unchristian* than to throw off the Government of this one Heavenly Guide, and to live as if we were severally acted by so many Infernal Furies ?

Even as we are called in one hope of our calling, (that's the *third*) we must all be Friends in Heaven, if we ever meet there ; Why do we bite then, and devour one another in the way thither ?

One Lord, (that's the next) who redeemed us all, at the same rate of his own most precious Blood : And is it agreeable to this relation, for the Servants of the same Master to make disturbance, nay, confusion in his Family ? Is this, think you, for his Service ? Or can it turn to our good account, when he reckons with us ?

One Faith, delivered to us by his Apostles ; How come we to fall out about that, which teaches us
to

to agree ? For *faith worketh by love*, as the Apostle speaks, *Gal. V. 6.*

One Baptism, whereby we are received into Christ's Family, upon the same terms and conditions. *We are marked with the same Cognizance* (as an excellent Writer of our own glosses upon it *) *we use the same word, we march under the same banner ;* How come we to mistake one another for Enemies ?

* Bp.
Bram-
hall's An-
swer to
S. W. p.
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1.

Lastly, There is *one God and Father of all, who is above all*, by his most excellent Nature ; *and through all*, by his Providence and Care of the whole World, especially of every Member of the Church ; *and in all*, by the operations of his Grace in our hearts. For Christians then to contend, and quarrel, and fight, What is it, but to divide this *one God*, to commit him against himself, to disown his Government, to cross his Motions, to refuse to follow the conduct of his Graces, which works in us ; and by abandoning our selves unto our own passions, to throw our selves out of his Fatherly care of us, and Favour towards us ; and to expose our selves to all the sin and all the mischief, unto which the malice of the Evil Spirit can hurry us ?

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Behold here, not *one* or *two* alone, but *seven* Bands of Unity and Peace among Christians: whereby they are tied to such mutual care of each others welfare; that they cannot vex, much less destroy one another, unless they forget all these Obligations, and break these Bands in sunder.

Nay, there is not a Leaf in the whole Book of God (wherein we read these things) but it teaches us this blessed accord. The very Body of the holy Scriptures, we might easily see if we did observe, from the one end of them to the other, is a most lively Image and Type of this *unity of the spirit in the bond of Peace*, which the Apostle commends unto us in this place. For though the Writers of them lived in divers Ages, in distant places, and were of different tempers; yet they all most admirably agree together, having the very same relish in their writings; carrying on the same design, and aiming at the self same end; without the least ground for suspicion, that they had any private respect to themselves.

Let us but remember then, that we have so many ties upon us, and endeavour to have a feeling of them; and then, as the consideration that we are Members of the same civil Society, moves us to be at peace one with another in the State, which cannot otherways subsist, but must be dis-

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solved:

solved: So the serious consideration that we are Members of the same Sacred Body of Christ, linkt together by so many strong ligaments, will much more move us, to study the Peace of his Church; which cannot be preserved, but by a firm Union of those parts of which it consists, and is made up.

To end this, let it be considered that the peace of God, here mentioned, is a branch of Charity; as appears by the foregoing words, *v. 14. And above all these things, put on Charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, &c.* Which tell us, that peace is the natural effect and product, of a lively and sincere Love in the Heart: Especially of such a love; as is between the Members of the same Body.

1. For we naturally fear to do any harm to those we love: And it is from the injuries we do one another, of several sorts, that abundance of quarrels and contentions arise among us.

2. But suppose any hurt be done, the affection we have to those whom we dearly love, disposes to look upon all the faults we commit against them, as great; and all that they commit against us, as small. Which stops up the very source of quarrels: which, for the most part, spring from those false Ideas, which make all things

things that concern our selves look very bigg ; and those that concern other men seem very little.

3. Nay, we are so far from being disposed to hurt those we love, that we cannot but perceive an inclination we have to serve and succour them, the best we are able. Which it is not possible for us to do, unless we be at peace with them. For Peace is the very gate, by which we enter into their Hearts ; which is barred against us, when men have an aversion for us, and are upon terms of Enmity or opposition to us. Therefore if we be bound to help, we are bound to be at peace, one with another. And all that have any sense of *Humanity*, cannot but confess that we are made by God to be helpful one to another : which *Christianity* cannot but make us more sensibly acknowledge. Because of the ardent love, which, above all things, it commends to us ; and is no where so strong, as between Members of the same Body ; especially of such a Body as theirs, which hath Christ for its Head, and the Spirit of God for its Soul and Life. Which inclines them and powerfully moves them, to hold all together in love and peace : as the only means of preserving and edifying the Body of Christ, and also of perfecting it for the happy Rest of the other World.

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Thus

Thus I have given a brief account of the *Reasons* for this duty. Which sufficiently commends it self to us, in that it is the *peace of God*: but the Apostle presses it from this consideration *also*, that we are called to it in *one body*.

II.

I proceed now to the last part of my Text, the means or help (as I understand it) which the Apostle prescribes, for the introducing, and increasing the *peace of God*; and giving it the *rule* over our hearts: which is contained in these Words; *And be ye thankful*.

We are very apt, as you have heard, to be disgusted at many things, which are disagreeable to us: from whence arises, much disquiet, discontent, and sometimes quarrels with those, who give us such distaste. But if we would spend that time, in recounting Gods mercies to us, and giving him our solemn thanks for them, which we spend in complaining, in finding fault one with another, and aggravating every thing which displeases us; we should be perfectly cured of those distempers; and ashamed to make such a bustle and stir, as we are wont to do, about such small things, as now disquiet us.

Thankfulness, we all agree, is a Christian Duty, as much as any other.

And

And not only a Duty enjoyn'd us by God, but to which we are inclined by Nature ; if our Hearts be touch'd with the least sense of his Divine Benefits.

And that it is very pleasant and delightful, as all natural Motions are, every one may feel, who pleases to make a trial.

And no less profitable and beneficial, we must needs acknowledge ; because he invites a new Benefit, who most gratefully acknowledges the old.

And lastly, (to omit the rest) we cannot but confess, that nothing more becomes us, than Thankfulness ; because we have nothing originally of our selves, but all purely from God. Which makes it the most decent thing in the World, to be paying him our perpetual acknowledgments.

Or if there should be any one so perverse, as not to be sensible of this, he cannot but yield, that it is far more decent and becoming, than perpetual complaints and discontents, brawlings and scoldings one with another, about every petty difference.

Far more agreeable, I am sure, to the Christian Spirit (if we know what that is) more be-
seeming those who lye under infinite Obligations to God our Saviour, which challenge our highest and incessant Praises ; than it is to murmur and
repine,

repine, to find faults and pick quarrels, to contend and strive ; which end too oft in fighting and destroying one another.

We may well be ashamed then , and confounded at our folly and disingenuity, if we do not live in a sincere practice of this Duty : Which, if we do, will be an effectual means to suppress all such unseemly behaviour as that above-mentioned ; because it strikes at the very root of all Discontent , and Wrath, and Pride, and such like evil Affections, which give disturbance unto us, and unto others.

We cannot easily be discontented about any thing, when we set our selves seriously to consider, how many Blessings, both temporal and spiritual, past, present and to come, we stand indebted for to the Divine Bounty ; and accordingly offer to him the Sacrifice of Praise continually, giving Thanks unto his Name.

We shall soon suppress Anger and Rage at those that offend us, when we remember with due thankfulness, as we ought to do perpetually, how oft we have provoked God ; and have been mercifully forborn, and forgiven by his patient and long-suffering goodness towards us.

The swellings of Pride will presently go down, when Thankfulness puts us in mind, that we are
nothing,

nothing, nor have any thing of our own; but depend wholly upon God: Who can soon humble us, and lay us low, if we be forgetful of his bounty to us.

All harshness and severity will be abated, by the thoughts of God's lenity, compassion and kind dealing with us: there will be no room for fretting Envy, to trouble us, or molest others; but it will be immediately thrust out of doors, when this Thought comes into our Mind, and fills our Heart with devout Affections to God: That we are in a far better condition than we deserve; and, if we be ungrateful, may fear to be in a worse.

In short, All those Graces from whence (I observed in the beginning) the Peace of God springs, are manifestly maintained and nourished by continual thankfulness to God for all his Benefits. In which if we exercise our selves, it will give the Peace of God the government of us; by making us humble and courteous, mild and gentle, kind and merciful, meek and patient; which are the natural qualities of a truly thankful Christian.

Let us make this then our constant employment and our delight; and look upon a thankful Heart, Hom. 1. ad Pop. Anti-orch. as a great Treasure (to use the words of St. Chrysostome) *inestimable*.

inestimable Riches, a Good of which none can rob us, Armour of Defence against all Temptations.

I.

And first, as we are Men who live together in the same neighbourhood, let us be thankful to God for all the good we receive one by another; and then we shall the easier pass by any evil that is done us; because it is small and inconsiderable, in comparison with the good we do, or may receive, by our neighbourly living together in one Society, Family, Parish or City.

There is not the meanest Man among us, who doth not some way or other serve the greatest: God having so made this World, that we should be helpful one to another in our several ranks and conditions; nay, that one sort of Men should not be able comfortably to subsist, without the service of the rest.

Which if we did consider, we should perceive so many and great benefits we reap thereby, that it would make us confess we have great reason to be thankful to the Creator and wise Disposer of all things: And that Thankfulness would moderate all the Disgusts we take one at another, which disturb our private peace and quietness.

Nay the Benefits we receive by some Men are so very considerable; that if we were not extremely ungrateful, we could not be so apt

as

as we are, to find fault with every thing we do not like in them: But for the sake of the greater good they do us, should wink at, or rather not mind, the smaller faults, we see or fancy in them. With which we are wont to be so distasted, as to forget all the Excellent Qualities they are indowed withal, and the great service they do to all mankind.

II.

But if we enlarged our thoughts beyond these bounds, and considered our selves as *Members of the same Kingdom*, we should find so many obligations to be thankful to God for the invaluable Blessings of Order and Government; that it would mightily appease that Heat and Violence which is very troublesome to us and others; when our Passions begin to raise a commotion, and to make us displeased with the present settlement.

For it is by the Protection and Favour of the publique Government, that we eat, and drink, and sleep, and do all other things, in safety.

Which thought alone is sufficient to quiet us, when our Spirits begin to fret and be tumultuous: That is, to quarrel with our Happiness.

E

III. But

III.

But let us still further make our selves sensible, of the far Nobler Benefits which we enjoy, *by being Christians*, and be truly thankful to God for them; more particularly for his great Grace, in *calling us to be one body in Christ*; and thereby calling us unto Peace one with another, and to Peace with him the *God of Peace* (who will be with us, as I have said, while we continue perfectly joyned together in the same Mind and Spirit) and then, we shall not have the heart to give the least disturbance unto this Blessed Society, of the Church of God: But with united Affection, study to preserve it, and to promote the Honour of it, by the most ardent Love and kindness, tenderness and compassion one towards another; especially in that part of it where we live.

Read the pathetical Exhortation of the Apostle in the Verses foregoing, upon which my Text depends; and it will be impossible not to have your heart affected with it, if you attend unto it, and ponder every Word. Put on therefore (as the *Elect of God, Holy and Beloved*) *bowels of Mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering; forbearing one another*

another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a quarrel against any: Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on Charity, &c.

What if you did read these Verses deliberately every Morning, before you went about any other business? It would not take up much of your time, nor cost you much pains; unless it be in laying them to heart, and laying them up in your Hearts. But whatsoever Labour you bestow in that, it will be abundantly recompensed in the Benefit, you and others will receive by it: if this small portion of the Word of Christ, dwell in you richly (as it follows immediately after my Text) and dispose you to continue in this Heavenly Temper all the day long.

And how can you chuse but be so disposed, if you consider how much you are bound to God for his inestimable benefits bestowed upon you: in making you his *Elect, Holy and Beloved*. Ponder these Three Words seriously, and look upon your selves as *Elect of God*, that is, chosen unto Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit and Belief of the Truth (as he speaks 2 Thes. II. 13.) *Holy*, that is, separated from the profane World, to be his devoted Servants:

Beloved, that is made partakers of the greatest kindness Heaven could do us, in sending his Son to save us : And then you will not be able to reject the Exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto Children V. Ephes 1, 2. Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear Children ; and walk in Love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering and a Sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.

I V.

Especially when we remember that we are not bare Christians. but *Reformed Christians* : whose Principles lead to Unity and Peace, more than the Principles of any other Christians whatsoever.

For the very *Basis* of the *Reformed Religion* is this, that *all necessary Truths* are not only contained in the *Holy Scriptures* ; but evidently and plainly set down there. Which single Truth being agreed ; it is manifest there must needs be an *Unity of opinions* among us, in all things necessary.

And as for other things which are not evident in the *Holy Scriptures*, and therefore are *not necessary* ; what should hinder, but that notwithstanding any different Opinions about

about them, there may be among us an *Unity of Affection*. Unto which the Holy Scriptures direct and press us, as the most necessary duty; and as the greatest happiness, of which this World is capable.

For there is nothing the Gospel urges so much, as kindness, forbearance, tender compassion one of another: Such kindness, as making us look upon one another as Brethren, and fellow-Members, will not let us break all the bonds of Friendship, that are between us.

For why should there be any breach among those, who are agreed in this plain principle? That there being Unity of Opinion among them in all things Necessary; in things not necessary, Unity of Opinion is not necessary, but only Unity of Affection. Which will make us study, and embrace the means of our Common Preservation; by mutual condescension to such terms of Agreement, as will establish a firm and undisturbed peace among us.

In which, if there should happen any breach, the same Spirit of love and goodness will dispose us immediately to make it up; by not adhering too stiffly to our own private opinions; much less to any worldly interest: which must be laid aside

aside by all peaceable-minded men; that is, by all good Christians.

Who ought not to engage in fierce oppositions, much less in confident censuring and condemning one another; but with all humility, modesty, and calmness endeavour each others information: or, if that cannot be obtain'd patiently to bear with one anothers infirmities: according to the forenamed golden Rule of St. Paul, VI Gal. 2. *Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.*

The *Law of Christ*, that is, his *peculiar Law*, is the *Law of Love*: which he calls a *new Commandment*, XIII. *Joh. 34.* and his *Commandment*, XV. *Joh. 12.* *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.* Which we then fulfil, or perfectly observe; when it makes us *bear one anothers burdens*, that is, offences; whether they be infirmities or sins.

For as long as there are any hopes of amendment, we ought (as the Apostle there teaches in the Verse foregoing) *if any man be overtaken with a fault, to restore such a one with the Spirit of meekness, considering ourselves, lest we also be tempted.* That is, we must tenderly admonish such offenders, study in the kindest and softest manner to reclaim them: which is no small labour and trouble indeed;

deed: but thereby we in the properest sense *take part of their burden* upon our selves, whilst we seek, by such charitable means to rid them of it.

V.

And now if in the last place, we make our selves sensible, that we are *such Reformed Christians*, as have been lately saved and delivered in a wonderful manner, from the hands of those that designed our destruction; it will raise our thankfulness to such a height, that it will surmount all those clouds, which overcast our joy in God, and in his Salvation.

For what a blessing is it, that we have the liberties of our Holy Religion: and meet here together in peace and quietness, without the least apprehension of such dangers, as not long ago hung over us? If we had been deprived of it, should we not have accounted, the loss to be invaluable? What is the matter then, that we do not set the greatest price, upon the enjoyment? Is it Nothing to be delivered from those *fears*, wherewith we were lately surrounded? what should we think if God should throw us back again into them? But there is a great deal more to be thankful for; which is the *hopes* we have that

that this blessed Liberty will be continued and secured to us, and to our Posterity after us. Which will derive a Blessing likewise upon all other Protestant Churches abroad: Whose safety lies in our preservation.

Nay, this one single reflection, that we have had the happiness to behold a Protestant King and Queen, here worshipping God together in this place (a sight, which if it hath been ever seen in England, yet not these Seventy years) is enough to transport us with such joy, as should make us quite forget all our differences and contents: And let us think of nothing else; but what we shall render to the Lord for such benefits, as he hath bestowed upon us.

For which we can never thank him enough; and therefore let us thank him continually.

Evening, and Morning, and Noon, let us give our solemn thanks unto him. Yea,

Let us bless the Lord at all times, let his praise be ever in our mouths.

When we sit in our house (as Moses speaks in another case) when we walk by the way, when we lye down, and when we rise up; let us be talking of all his wondrous works: saying with the Psalmist,

Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can shew forth all his praise? Thy

Thy righteousness (or goodness.) O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee?

Thou art great and dost wondrous things: Thou art God alone.

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart: I will Glorifie thy Name for evermore.

For great is thy Mercy towards me, and thou hast delivered my Soul from the lowest Hell (i.e. the extreamest Dangers)

Therefore shall my Tongue speak of thy Righteousness, and of thy Praise all the day long.

I will Praise the Lord with my whole heart; secretly among the faithful, and in the Congregation.

For the Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have Pleasure therein.

His Work is Honourable and Glorious: And his Righteousness endureth for ever,

Now the God of all Grace, grant unto every Soul of us, such truly thankful hearts, that we may be always praising him and speaking good of his Name: And then the Peace of God will Rule and Govern us; unto which we are called in one Body, by Christ Jesus. To whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost be Eternal Praises. Amen.

F I N I S.